

I CLAIM:

1. A spittoon for servicing a printhead, the spittoon comprising:
a reservoir for a waste ink; and
a precipitating agent within the reservoir, wherein the precipitating agent is
5 selected to react with a component of the waste ink to form a precipitate.
2. The spittoon of claim 1, wherein the precipitating agent is
incorporated in an absorbent pad within the reservoir.
- 10 3. The spittoon of claim 1, wherein the precipitating agent is a salt of a
multivalent cation.
4. The spittoon of claim 1, wherein the precipitating agent is selected
from the group consisting of calcium salts, aluminum salts, tin salts, copper salts,
15 and iron salts.
5. The spittoon of claim 4, wherein the precipitating agent is a chloride
or a nitrate.
- 20 6. The spittoon of claim 1, wherein the precipitating agent is a
multivalent organic acid.
7. The spittoon of claim 6, wherein the precipitating agent is selected
from the group consisting of citric acid, succinic acid, and salicylic acid.
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8. A spittoon for servicing a printhead, the spittoon comprising:
a bottom;
one or more walls, each wall having a top edge, the walls in combination
with the bottom defining a waste ink reservoir having a capacity;
30 an inwardly extending lip at the top edge of at least one wall; and
a precipitating agent within the reservoir, wherein the precipitating agent is
a salt of a multivalent cation or a multivalent organic acid.

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9. The spittoon of claim 8, wherein the precipitating agent is incorporated in an absorbent pad within the reservoir.

10. The spittoon of claim 8, wherein the precipitating agent is calcium
5 nitrate or magnesium nitrate.

11. The spittoon of claim 8, wherein the lip extends inwardly around an upper perimeter of the spittoon and defines a spittoon entrance.

12. The spittoon of claim 8, further comprising a retractable lid.
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13. The spittoon of claim 12, where the lid is enclosed within the spittoon when retracted.

14. The spittoon of claim 13, where, when the lid is retracted, the lid is enclosed in a portion of the spittoon that is distinct from the waste ink reservoir.
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15. The spittoon of claim 8, where the reservoir is configured such that when the spittoon is tilted toward the lip at an angle up to ninety degrees, the lip
20 retains a volume of waste ink equal to approximately one-quarter of the capacity of the waste ink reservoir.

16. The spittoon of claim 1, where the reservoir is configured such that when the spittoon is tilted toward the lip at an angle up to forty-five degrees, the
25 lip retains a volume of waste ink equal to approximately one-half of the capacity of the waste ink reservoir.

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17. An inkjet printer, comprising a printhead and a printhead service station, the service station including a spittoon with a bottom and one or more walls, each wall having a top edge, the walls in combination with the bottom defining a waste ink reservoir, a lip that extends inwardly from at least one wall, an absorbent pad within the reservoir; and a precipitating agent incorporated in the absorbent pad, wherein the precipitating agent is selected to react with a component of the waste ink to form a precipitate.

18. The printer of claim 17, wherein the absorbent pad incorporates one or more precipitating agents that are magnesium salts or calcium salts.

19. The printer of claim 17, where the service station includes one or more pen caps and one or more pen wipers.

20. The printer of claim 17, where the spittoon further comprises a retractable lid that is enclosed within the spittoon when retracted, where the lid is configured to be opened and closed automatically by the printer.

21. An inkjet printing mechanism, comprising:
means for spitting ink into a spittoon;
means for retaining said previously spit ink within said spittoon during tilting of said inkjet printing mechanism at an angle of up to 45 degrees; and
means within said spittoon for initiating a precipitation reaction with at least one component of said previously spit ink.

22. A method of utilizing a spittoon in an inkjet printing mechanism, comprising:

spitting ink into the spittoon positioned in a spit orientation;
accumulating a supply of ink in said spittoon;
5 precipitating at least one component of said ink in said spittoon;
removing said spittoon with said supply from the inkjet printing

mechanism;

during said removing, tilting said spittoon from said spit orientation; and
during said tilting, retaining said supply within said spittoon.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said spittoon is tilted at up to 90 degrees.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein said spittoon is tilted in more than one direction.

25. The method of claim 22, further comprising dumping said supply and replacing said spittoon in said inkjet printing mechanism.